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CONSOLIDATION OF MILITARY VOLUNTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM: FEASIBILITY
AND COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis conducts a comparative analysis of all the military services' voluntary education (VOLED) programs and a cost benefit analysis on consolidation of selected VOLED programs into one DOD-wide program.

There were three major criteria by which the VOLED programs were selected for consolidation: common purpose, shared goals, and same target audience. Based on the above criteria, Tuition Assistance, Functional Skills, and the Apprenticeship program were deemed suitable for consolidation. The Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges programs and Community College of the Air Force, which met the criteria, were deemed unsuitable due to overriding concerns about budget.

The preliminary cost/benefit analysis indicates that consolidation or centralization of the Tuition Assistance, Functional Skills and Apprenticeship Programs are cost-effective.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

The Department of Defense (DOD) budget has been decreasing for several years causing increasing emphasis on finding ways to eliminate program duplication among the services. One example of this effort is the creation of Defense Financial Accounting Service (DFAS). Another possible area might be Voluntary Education (VOLED).

Department of Defense Directive 1322.8 "Voluntary Education Programs for Military Personnel" states that the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel) (ASD(FM&P)) shall provide periodic review and overall policy guidance for voluntary education programs. During a recent meeting between representatives of the ASD(FM&P) and the Military Services, the question arose as to whether the group should examine consolidating the individual service VOLED programs into one DOD program. Certain services (Navy, Army, Marine Corps) were interested in the consolidation issue but as of this date, there has been no further action.

With DOD downsizing, voluntary education has taken on new meaning. Each of the military services report a significant increase in the use of Tuition Assistance. Data from Defense

Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)¹ show there has been a drop in the number of service members eligible for the high school completion program (4.3% in FY1990; 3.8% in FY1992). This reduction in eligible service members may be attributed to the streamlining of Military Services and the elimination of the least qualified individuals. The data also shows that from FY1990 to FY1992 Undergraduate Tuition Assistance program enrollment increased from 32.6% to 41.4% of eligibles² and Graduate Tuition Assistance program participation rose from 30.7% to 37.9% of eligibles. It appears that military personnel are reevaluating their educational needs in an effort to become more promotable, and, at the same time, to prepare for possible transition to the civilian sector.

In 1991 all branches of the military saw an increase in enrollment in their voluntary education programs of between 20%-30%. (Thorpe, 1991) Dr. Frances Kelly, Head, Educational Services Branch, Personal Excellence and Partnerships Division, the Bureau of Naval Personnel, states that the increase in participation in voluntary education has created

¹Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) provides support to the voluntary education functions of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. DANTES is one example of a partnership between the civilian and military education communities which makes maximum use of educational courses and examinations from civilian schools, college, and associations.

²DOD total number of qualified service members entitled to participate in a program divided by the total number of actual participants.

resource stress causing the Military Services to scramble for funds. She summarized the need for education as follows:

In a nation facing unprecedented economic uncertainty, in a Navy recognizing that quality factors become even more critical in a smaller force, and for young men and women in the military who are worried about their own competitive status within the organization as well as their potential for a comparable civilian career, education has been recognized as a possible source of occupational security. (Thorpe, 1991)

B. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. The Objective

The purpose of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the services' (Navy, Marine Corps, Army and Air Force) voluntary education programs and a cost benefit analysis on consolidation of selected VOLED programs into one DOD-wide program.

This study will attempt to establish criteria for quality and cost-effective VOLED programs; and will analyze certain alternatives to determine which are most beneficial.

2. Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed:

a. Primary Research Question

Is it beneficial and cost effective for the DOD to consolidate selected VOLED programs?

b. Secondary Research Questions

- What VOLED programs are offered by the Military Services and what policies govern each program?
- What are the criteria for a quality VOLED program?

- How might the DOD consolidate selected VOLED programs? What are the costs of such consolidation? What are the benefits?

C. SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

a. Scope

This thesis focuses on an analysis of each service's approach to voluntary education (for active duty service members) to determine if these programs should be consolidated into one DOD program. This study does not focus on the rationale for these programs, nor does it make judgements as to whether certain programs should be expanded or reduced. Rather, it seeks to present a useful analytical tool for further discussion within the Department of Defense.

b. Limitations

The data used in this thesis was acquired through surveys, phone calls and personal interviews. Written information on the consolidation of VOLED programs is limited because there has not been a DOD mandate to address this issue.

c. Assumptions

This thesis assumes the reader has limited knowledge of the Military Services' VOLED programs.

D. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

Chapter I introduces the Voluntary Education Program in general. Chapter II reviews pertinent literature. Chapter

III describes the research methodology, and Chapter IV discusses each service's program and policy for voluntary education and provides data on program enrollment and funding. Chapter V interprets and analyzes the data. Chapter VI develops conclusions and makes recommendations. The thesis concludes with appendices, and a list of references.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Discussion of the literature pertaining to each service's voluntary education (VOLED) programs and their policies and procedures is reserved for Chapter IV. This chapter is limited to a discussion of literature related to consolidating all DOD VOLED programs into a single program and literature that compares the different service programs.

While literature comparing the services' VOLED programs is sparse, this author was able to locate three reports which discuss and compare the services' programs. These reports are:

- Navy's Voluntary Education FY91 and FY92 Annual Assessment
- DANTES, Voluntary Education Program Management Information System
- DOD Directive 1322.8.

A. VOLUNTARY EDUCATION FY91 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

LT William Thorpe, USN, did extensive work on the Navy's "Voluntary Education FY91 Annual Assessment." The report discussed statistical data, and then estimated the degree to which the Navy's voluntary education program met the needs of its service members. It provides an overview of the Navy's voluntary education program for FY1991, details of the Program Objectives Memorandum (POM94), and FY1992 results from mid-year review. This report has since been updated by CDR Ken

Williams in the "Voluntary Education FY92 Annual Assessment." Although both reports are Navy oriented, they show varying degrees of enrollment and costs for each Military Service's VOLED program. LT Thorpe and CDR Williams analyzed all VOLED programs and support programs, pointing out the significant differences in the amount of funds expended on each. Table 1 shows the voluntary education support comparison for FY1992 for the Military Services.

TABLE 1

VOLUNTARY EDUCATION SUPPORT COMPARISON				
FY92				
	Navy	Army	Air Force	Marines
End Strength	546,739	606,124	450,352	184,574
VOLED individuals participating	79,840	208,990	192,104	31,537
% of End Strength	14.60%	34.48%	42.66%	17.09%
Total VOLED Budget	\$36.9M	\$82.5M	\$65M	\$10M
Average cost per participant	\$463	\$395	\$338	\$317
Tuition Assistance Enrollment (courses) Cost	116,299 \$24.5M	262,091 \$41M	213,995 \$46M	31,864 \$9M
Basic Skills Enrollment (people) Cost	15,818 \$1.8M	79,231 \$5.5M	754 \$12K	7,174 \$481K
SOC Enrollments (people) Degrees Completed	20,756 1,960	158,821 5,121	N/A N/A	N/A N/A
PACE Enrollments (people) Cost	22,537 \$4M	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A
Tuition Assistance Enrollment (courses)	116,299	262,091	213,995	31,864
Tuition Assistance Cost	\$24.5M	\$41M	\$46M	\$9M

Table 1 Source: Williams FY92

The table indicates that the Army spent \$82.5 million on voluntary education in FY1992, the highest amount of any of

the services. This result could be expected due to the Army being the largest of the Military Services. However, the table also shows that the Air Force spent \$65 million, almost twice as much as the Navy's \$36.9 million, even though their end strength is smaller than the Navy's: 546,739 and 450,352 personnel, respectively. The Marine Corps, which is one-third the size of the Navy, spent one-third (\$10 million) of the Navy's budget for VOLED programs (in comparison).

One possible explanation for this difference in the amounts spent is that the garrison environment of the Army and the low mobility of the Air Force enables service members to have greater access to education. Another is that the Army and Air Force education field staffs are larger than that of the Navy. Therefore, the Army and Air Force are better able to market and promote their VOLED programs and to provide a wider range of services than the Navy. LT Thorpe states that the percentage of tuition assistance users to end strength shows that of the Military Services, the Navy has the lowest VOLED participation. In FY1992, the Navy spent \$463 on VOLED programs per participant while the Air Force spent only \$338.

B. VOLUNTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

DANTES has produced a statistical report annually entitled "Voluntary Education Program Management Information System FY--." The FY1992 report provides a statistical comparison of

non-traditional education programs that take place outside the formal classroom. It does not make any conclusions or recommendations. The following types of data are provided:

- Department Education Levels: This section of the report shows each Military Service by officer and enlisted and service totals. The number of participants enrolled in non-high school, high school, associate, bachelors, masters and doctorate programs are provided.
- Statistical data on high school, undergraduate, graduate, non-credit course and functional skills/basic skills. In each of these categories, data is provided on the number of enrollments, completions, tuition assistance cost and cost per enrollment.
- DOD summaries of completion for non-high school graduates, high school graduates, associates, bachelors degrees, masters degrees and doctoral degrees are also provided with the total cost per enrollment for each program.

Within this report, DANTES has included a "Voluntary Education Fact Sheet FY92." This sheet displays the enrollment statistics for the following programs: High School, Non-Created Courses (language, military specialty and basic skills) and post-secondary education (undergraduate and graduate) for each Military Service. It also provides data on the number of degrees completed, expenditures in personnel cost, contract cost (non-instructional and instructional), and tuition assistance.

Enrollment data for three fiscal years has been summarized in the "Voluntary Education Report Three Year Summary FY90 through FY92." This summary displays enrollment statistics for each service in three types of programs that are pertinent to this thesis: High School Completion Program, Undergraduate

Tuition Assistance Activity and Graduate Tuition Assistance Activity. In each of these programs, number of eligibles, enrollment, cost per enrollment, percentage of enrollment to eligibles, and completions are broken down by Military Services and fiscal year.

1. High School Completion Program

Figure 1 displays the number of enrollments for the high school completion program. The Army and Air Force show decreases in enrollments from FY1990 through FY1991, whereas the Navy and Marine Corps show an increase in enrollments. DOD totals display a decrease in enrollments over the same three year time frame. As stated in Chapter I, this DOD-wide reduction in enrollments in high school completion programs may be due to the services' emphasis on enlisting only the most eligible people, the majority of whom are high school graduates. (DANTES, 1992) However, in 1993, recruiters of all the military services reported a decline in people who have a high school degree and want to enlist in the service.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

FY90 THROUGH FY92

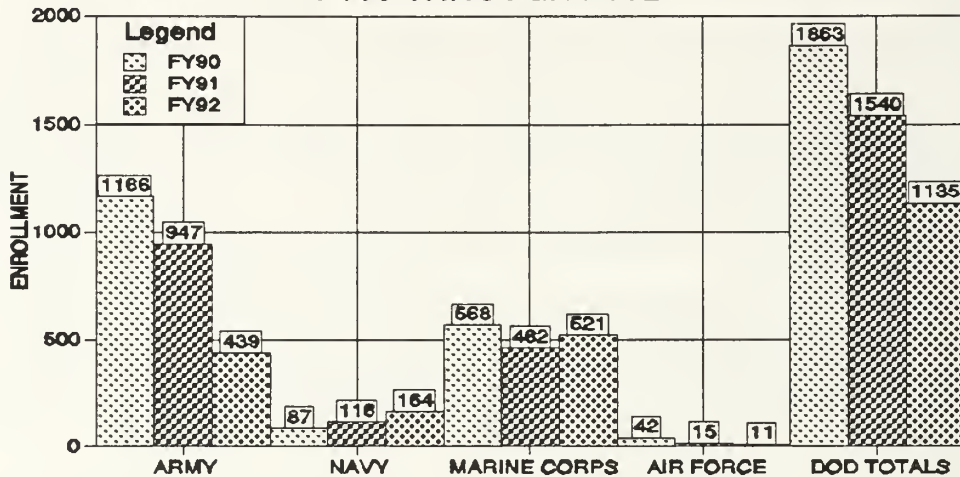


Figure 1 Source: DANTES 1992

Figure 2 displays the cost per enrollment for the high school completion program. In FY1992, the Navy had an enrollment of 164 service members at a cost of \$145.48 per enrollment. The Army enrolled 439 individuals and the Marine Corps 521, at a cost per enrollment of \$121.07 and \$104.97, respectively.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

FY90 THROUGH FY92

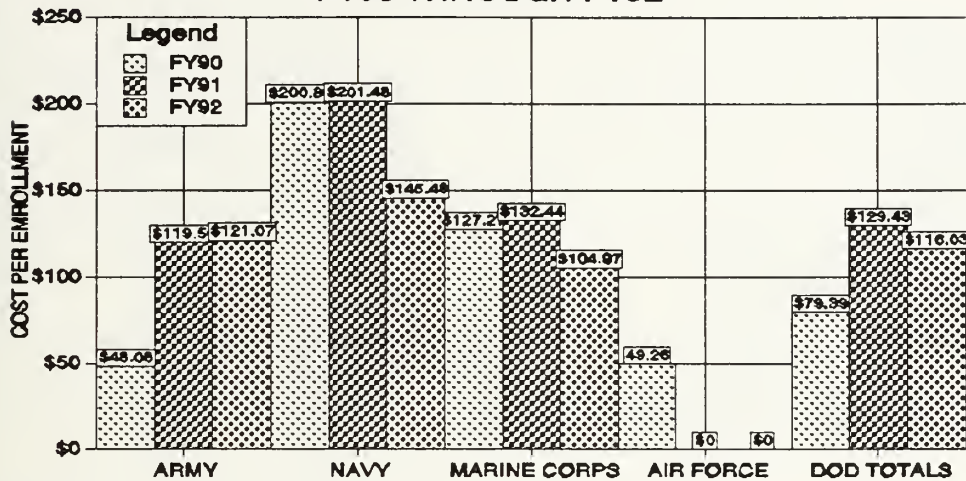


Figure 2 Source: DANTES 1992

2. Undergraduate Tuition Assistance Activity

Data on the Undergraduate Tuition Assistance Activity shows that all services had an increase in enrollments with DOD totals increasing from 447,881 in FY1990 to 518,237 in FY91.

In FY1992, the Navy undergraduate completions (courses) were 112,632 at a cost per course of \$203.85. On the other hand, the Air Force undergraduate completion for FY92 was 184,577 with \$184.09 the cost per course.

3. Graduate Tuition Assistance Activity

Overall, the Military Services Graduate Tuition Assistance program has shown an increase in the number of

graduate completions. The only exception is the Army, which has stayed about the same.

From FY1990 through FY1992, the Marine Corps displayed a higher cost per enrollment than the other Military Services. Figure 3 indicates the number of graduate courses completed and Figure 4 displays the cost per enrollments for FY1990 through FY1992 (shown on next page). In FY1992, the Marine Corps graduate course completion was 2,659 at a cost per course of \$613.52 as compared to the Air Force graduate course completion of 27,412 at a cost per course of \$471.61. The Army and Navy had graduate course completions in FY1992 of 13,259 and 12,581 with costs per course of \$455.56 and \$328.02, respectively.

Overall, DOD has seen an increase in secondary education which may indicate service personnel are starting to look more closely at their educational skills and how they compare with their counterparts.

GRADUATE TUITION ASSISTANCE

FY90 THROUGH FY92

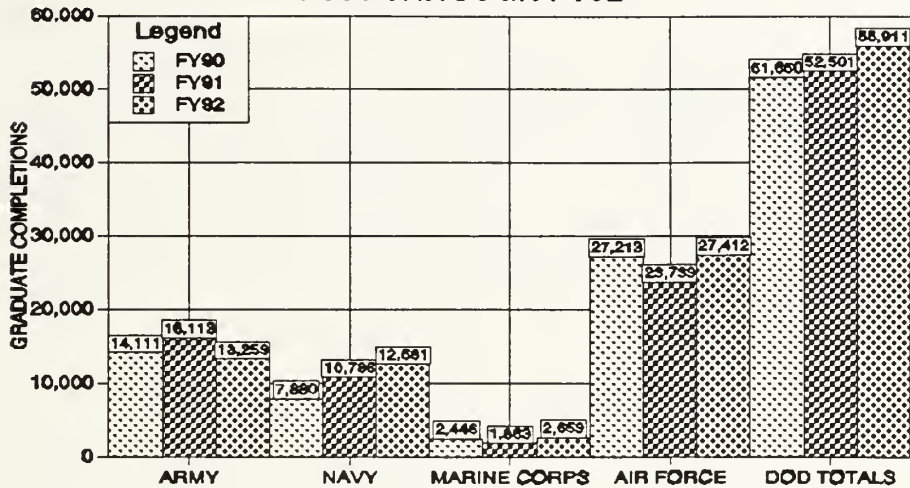


Figure 3 Source: DANTES 1992

GRADUATE TUITION ASSISTANCE

FY90 THROUGH FY92

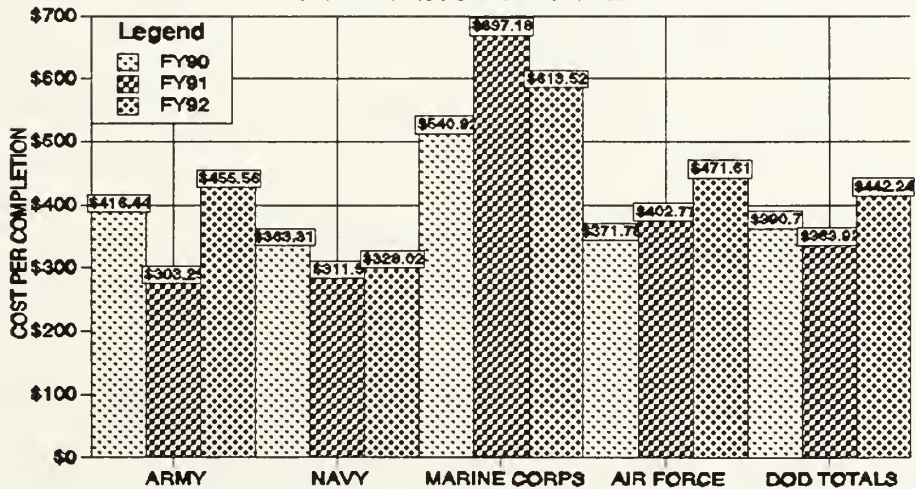


Figure 4 Source: DANTES 1992

C. DOD Directive 1322.8

Although policies and procedures differ for each services' VOLED programs, DOD Directive 1322.8 sets forth general guidance. The guidance states that VOLED programs must provide opportunities for service members to achieve educational, vocational, and career goals. As stated in the Directive, VOLED programs for the Military Services shall:

Be geared to programs, courses, and services provided by institutions and organizations, including high school, post-secondary vocational and technical schools, colleges, and universities, accredited by accrediting associations recognized by the Council on Post-secondary Accreditation and the Department of Education.

Include educational guidance and counseling by qualified personnel.

More specifically:

- Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 4302 covers schooling for active duty soldiers
- Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1142 authorizes counseling for soldiers transitioning out of service
- Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 2007 covers officer requirements for loan repayment

D. SUMMARY

The reports, "Voluntary Education FY91 and FY92 Annual Assessment" and "Voluntary Education Programs Management Information System," show increasing use of the VOLED programs, but with corresponding higher costs per participant.

This pattern will be further investigated in the data collection and analysis in Chapter V. As yet, there has been no attempt to consolidate the various service's VOLED programs. However, before any analysis of consolidation of the VOLED programs can be made, much more data is needed. Chapter III will discuss the data gathering process.

III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the basis for the questionnaire instrument and follow-up personal interviews. It also provides an outline of the structure of analysis of each service's Voluntary Education (VOLED) Program. The methodology for the comparative analysis and the cost benefit analysis are also explained.

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis explores the benefits of consolidation of the individual services' VOLED programs into one DOD VOLED program. Such consolidation may be timely, especially in view of the recent announcement of the National Performance Review, which calls for a reinvention of government. A two-pronged approach is utilized, consisting of a questionnaire followed up by personal interviews. The information obtained from the questionnaires, along with the data gained from the personal interviews, is analyzed for content to determine exactly what similarities exist among the four VOLED programs.

1. The Questionnaire

The issue of the consolidation of VOLED programs has not been formally examined. Therefore, part of the research design was to create a questionnaire that would collect data needed to conduct a valid comparison of programs. To get a

better basic understanding of individual service VOLED systems and to aid in the compilation of appropriate survey questions, telephone interviews were conducted with each service's VOLED director. The resultant questionnaire, along with a cover letter, is contained in Appendix A. It asked for information in two areas: (1) general information on the service's overall VOLED system, and (2) detailed information about each program.

a. General Questions from the Questionnaire

Part One of the questionnaire requested identification of the service as well as the name and title of the person in charge of the VOLED programs. These questions were designed to facilitate contact with a specific person if further discussion was needed.

The topic of program funding is also addressed in Part One. Questions were asked regarding dollar levels allocated for all voluntary education programs from FY1990 through FY1993.

Additional general information regarding such topics as separate schools (colleges) was requested. This was of interest in light of the establishment of the Community College of the Air Force. This section of the questionnaire also asked for comments and insights into the issue of consolidation of the VOLED programs.

b. Detailed Program Information

Such issues as program instruction title, description of program, annual overhead cost for FY1990 through FY1993, budget for FY1990 through FY1993, and requirements for civilian instructors were addressed here.

The questionnaire also requested that the respondent add to the data by commenting on the validity of the questions, detailing any assumptions made when answering the questionnaire, and making any other comments deemed necessary.

Survey questions were designed to be open-ended to allow for variation in responses, and to highlight similarities and differences in the key elements of each program. Four surveys were mailed, one to each service's VOLED director. All four surveys were completed and returned.

2. The Personal Interviews

The second part of the research design was the conduct of personal interviews. These interviews were conducted with Army, Navy, and Air Force VOLED directors (the Marine Corps' VOLED director was unavailable due to on-site training exercises). As these individuals also completed the survey, the interviews were designed to clarify and expand on survey responses. Each interviewee was first asked to give further explanation of answers provided in the questionnaire or, in some cases, to answer unanswered questions. Then interviewees

were asked to expand upon their answers to questions about possible consolidation of VOLED programs, citing pros and cons and other concerns about consolidation. Information gained helped determine which programs feasibly could be combined and projected impacts of consolidation.

B. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THE DATA

Four VOLED programs were compared in a number of areas to determine similarities. These specific areas were selected because of their potential importance in the event that the programs are consolidated. The following criteria were used:

- description and policies of the program;
- method used to measure success of the program;
- the cost per course for each service member;
- the annual budget for each service program;
- distribution of funds by each service for their program;
- the overhead cost of the program;
- requirement, if any, for civilian instructors.

To accomplish the analysis, each service's VOLED program was categorized by purpose. At this point, any VOLED program that could not be categorized was deemed to be unique to that service and was eliminated from the comparative analysis. Once the remaining components were grouped, cost was compared. Cost was defined as the service's annual cost for the program using figures for the last four years (FY1990 through FY1993). The definition of cost also included a determination of who

holds that program's budget, the number of service members enrolled in that particular program, as well as the number of interested service members unable to participate due to an inadequate funding level. The cost of civilian instructors for that program was also taken into consideration.

The data obtained from the questionnaire responses and personal interviews was used to develop conclusions about the similarities in the VOLED programs across the services and to serve as the basis for the ensuing recommendations. Any suggested consolidations were based on the selection of the most efficient program as a model for standardization of the other programs. Chapter IV will describe questionnaire and survey results in detail.

IV. MILITARY SERVICES

This chapter discusses each Military Service's Voluntary Education (VOLED) Programs. Unless otherwise cited, information for this section was obtained from questionnaires, personal interviews and the DANTES report, "Voluntary Education Program Management Information System FY92".

A. NAVY

The head of VOLED programs in the Navy is Dr. Frances Kelly, Head, Educational Services Branch, Personal Excellence and Partnerships Division, The Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Table 2 displays the Navy's total funding levels used for all VOLED programs during FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 2

YEAR	FUNDING LEVEL
FY 1990	\$30,200,785
FY 1991	\$32,810,801
FY 1992	\$37,808,000
FY 1993	\$37,216,854

1. Navy Campus

Navy Campus is a Network of 62 field offices worldwide that administer voluntary education programs. Navy Campus not only provides Navy personnel with assistance in defining their individual educational goals, but offers services that

enable them to achieve those goals. This includes educational counseling, testing services, financial aid, the degree completion program, and personal counseling. Some of the specific functions of Navy Campus are the administration of all on-base education programs and development of education plans and assessments for sea service members using Program for Afloat College Education (PACE), screening of members for admission to the Functional Skills Program, and locally managing the Tuition Assistance (TA) Program. The field staff includes GS-9 - GS-13 civilian professionals as well as clerical and technical personnel (GS-4/5 - GS-7). The following Table displays the cost and number of authorized personnel in FY1990 through FY1993. (Williams,1992)

Table 3

YEAR	COST	PERSONNEL
FY 1990	\$6,191,060	184
FY 1991	\$6,752,503	182
FY 1992	\$6,637,856	178
FY 1993	\$7,386,550	171

2. Program for Afloat College Education (PACE)

PACE is a fully funded, no cost to the service member, lower division undergraduate program which offers courses at sea. The program has two forms: PACE I is taught by civilian instructors embarked on the ship and PACE II provides courses through use of interactive micro-computers aboard ships.

Courses are offered tuition-free to service members, however, the service members must pay for their own text books. The PACE program is popular among service members, particularly when their ship is deployed for a extended period and they want to complete college courses. The following Table displays the program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993, including the cost of courses and employee salaries, along with the number of participants (cost and number of participants include both PACE I and PACE II).

TABLE 4

YEAR	FUNDING LEVEL	PARTICIPANTS
FY 1990	\$3,456,428	21,201
FY 1991	\$4,062,949	21,610
FY 1992	\$3,981,187	22,537
FY 1993	\$3,971,000	18,443

From the questionnaires, the success of the PACE program is measured by the number of courses, participants, and participating activities.

The policies and procedures of the PACE program are found in the OPNAVINST 1560.9 and CNETINST 1560.3D.

3. Navy's National Apprenticeship Program (NNAP)

NNAP allows Navy service members to pursue civilian journeyman status through a Department of Labor approved apprenticeship related to a Navy rating. Under this program, training received in the Navy is counted as creditable toward

a civilian apprenticeship in selected occupations. The only cost associated with NNAP is the cost of two full-time employees (GS-7 and GS-9) and printing cost.

The NNAP program success is measured by the new apprentices registered yearly, total number registered, and apprenticeships completed. Individuals keep meticulous records of working hours and the specific tasks performed in order to complete the requirements for journeyman status. Records are approved and verified by the individual supervisor. From FY1990 through FY1993, the total number of apprenticeships awarded was 2746.

The policies and procedures of the NNAP program are found in OPNAVINST 1560.10A.

4. Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, NAVY (SOCNAV)

SOC is a consortium of colleges and universities that have agreed to the transfer of credit and limited residency requirements for military students. SOCNAV-2 consists of accredited colleges that offer associate degree program on or accessible to Navy installations worldwide. The bachelor's degree equivalent is SOCNAV-4. Through these programs a service member enters into a student agreement contract (SOCNAV). The contract incorporates degree credit awarded for nontraditional learning, rate and rating experience, military training courses, credit-by-examination test, and all other courses which fit into a student's degree plan. SOC

guarantees transferability of credits earned from one SOC college to another. It also guarantees transferability of credit earned for a SOCNAV-2 degree to a related degree curriculum in the SOCNAV-4 system. Table 5 displays the program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993. The annual overhead cost are included in the annual budget figures.

TABLE 5

YEAR	FUNDING LEVEL
FY 1990	\$139,857
FY 1991	\$142,966
FY 1992	\$146,995
FY 1993	\$160,000

The questionnaire revealed SOCNAV program success is measured by the number of enrollments, number of participating institutions, and number of graduates.

The policies and procedures of the SOCNAV program are found in the CNETINST 1560.3D.

5. Basic Skills Program

This program provides opportunities, both ashore and afloat, to help service members improve their writing, mathematics, and reading skills. The course is offered free to the service member. According to the questionnaire, the number of participants who improve their demonstrable skill is the best source of how this program measures its success. Table 6 displays the program's annual budget for FY1990

through FY1993. The funding level includes the salaries of administrators.

TABLE 6

YEAR	FUNDING LEVEL	PARTICIPANTS
FY 1991	\$1,820,371	20,683
FY 1991	\$1,573,240	14,282
FY 1992	\$1,852,221	15,818
FY 1993	\$1,930,000	13,898

The policies and procedures of the Basic Skills Program are be found in the OPNAVINST 1560.9 and CNETINST 1560.3D.

6. Tuition Assistance (TA)

TA is a financial assistance program which pays a portion of the cost of tuition for active duty service members enrolled in an academic program off-duty. Service members are allowed to pursue a High School Degree at no cost, and Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees at 25% of cost (75 percent of the cost is paid by the Navy). The overhead cost includes TA funds expended and salaries of 10 personnel who take care of posting grades, billing, invoicing, and collection actions. The funding levels and course enrollments for FY1990 through FY1993 are found in Table 7.

TABLE 7

YEAR	FUNDING LEVEL	ENROLLMENTS
FY 1990	\$18,304,842	109,914
FY 1991	\$20,181,503	116,299
FY 1992	\$24,461,260	129,693
FY 1993	\$23,769,304	125,095

TA success rate is measured by number of course enrollments, and number of participants.

The policies and procedures of the Tuition Assistance Program are found in OPNAVINST 1560.9 and CNETINST 1560.3D.

B. ARMY

Mr. Willard Williams is the director, Army Continuing Education System.

Army counseling is the heart of the Army Continuing Education System (ACES). Counseling is the means by which all programs are determined, delivered, and measured to be of benefit to the service member and his/her family.

Counseling is a process which:

- identifies educational goals;
- determines individual abilities;
- develops a career plan;
- follows-up on enrollments;
- considers alternative methods and/or non-traditional means (testing, videos, life experience credits) for accomplishing set goals;
- researches financial aid available;

- acquires education and/or training relevant to the service members career, jobs, or personal ambitions;
- makes an easy transition from military to civilian life.

Table 8 displays the counseling annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 8

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1991	\$16,259,000
FY 1991	\$15,761,235
FY 1992	\$14,530,199
FY 1993	NOT AVAILABLE

1. Army Learning Centers (ALCs)

The Army Learning Centers (ALCs) are the nucleus by which the Army Continuing Education System (ACES) provides commanders the training and educational support resources necessary to assist the validated training, development and continuing educational needs of service members to improve current and anticipated job performance.

ALCs provide individuals or small groups education and training through multimedia-based instructional modes. ALCs are integrated with unit education and training activities to deliver such programs as basic skills training, computer training, Army Correspondence Course Programs, counseling services, audio/video training aids, and other career enhancing programs. There are many programs and services

available in which service members can participate within the ACES. Normally, service members visit an education counselor to develop an educational goal which outlines the desired ACES program. ALC representatives are full-time and part-time contract employees hired by a university. Table 9 displays the program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 9

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1990	\$6,394,028
FY 1991	\$5,333,750
FY 1992	\$3,277,040
FY 1993	NOT AVAILABLE

The success of the program is measured by positive customer feedback, increased usage of resources available in the ALC, increased enrollment of service members in the Army Correspondence and Apprenticeship programs, improvement of service members and family members basic skills, increased enrollments in college programs, attainment of career promotions, achievement of full workplace literacy, and completion of requirements for certificates and degrees.

The policies and procedures of the Army Learning Centers are found in AR 621-6.

2. Concurrent Admission Program (CONAP)

CONAP is a joint program between the U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) and participating Servicemembers

Opportunity Colleges (SOC) colleges and universities. This program admits eligible enlistees to college concurrent with enlistment in the Army. Table 10 displays the program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993 which is funded by the U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC).

TABLE 10

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1990	\$147,250
FY 1991	\$293,300
FY 1992	\$123,600
FY 1993	\$167,000

The success of CONAP can be measured by several factors such as:

- increase in college referral request by Recruiting Brigades
- steady increase in the percentage of college acceptances in relation to referrals
- increased participation of college and universities in SOC because of CONAP
- increased access for recruiters to high school and college recruiting market
- increase in the number of Army veterans using GI Bill benefits for college
- participation of CONAP service members in Army Continuing Education System (ACES) programs and services

The policies and procedures of the Concurrent Admission Program are found in AR 621-5.

3. Army Apprenticeship Program (AAP)

The Army Apprenticeship Program provides service members the opportunity to document skills obtained through their military training and experience. Upon completion of the required number of production work hours and appropriate related instruction, with verification by the supervisor, the service member receives a certificate of completion of apprenticeship from Department of Labor. Upon completion of Advance Individual Training (AIT) service members are informed of the availability of the AAP and instructed to visit an Army Education Center (AEC) at their first assignment to enroll. At the AEC the service member is counseled concerning the requirements for earning an apprenticeship certification in their skill. The service member tabulates his daily production hours, has hours verified by his supervisor, and quarterly brings the log to the AAP monitor for compilation. When the service member has completed the required number of production hours (2000-8000 hrs) and related classroom instruction (400-650 hrs) a request for a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship is submitted to the Department of Labor. Table 11 displays the program's equipment and personnel cost for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 11

YEAR	EQUIPMENT	PERSONNEL COST
FY 1990	\$1,847.00	\$4,007,100
FY 1991	\$1,058.00	\$2,578,900
FY 1992	\$1,494.00	\$1,528,100
FY 1993	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE

Success of the AAP is measured in three ways: percentage of AAP service members re-enlisting for same career field, percentage of AAP service members scoring high on skill tests, and the number of soldiers finding civilian jobs in their career fields upon departure from active duty service.

The policies and procedures of the Army Apprenticeship Program can be found in AR 621-5.

4. Advance Skills Education Program (ASEP)

ASEP enhances educational competencies of noncommissioned officers to support their career development and growth. Non-commissioned officers who are observed demonstrating high leadership potential are referred by their commands to the Army education center for program counseling and enrollment. The following Table displays the programs annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 12

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1991	\$1,000,000
FY 1991	\$1,200,000
FY 1992	\$930,000
FY 1993	NOT AVAILABLE

The success of ASEP is measured by demonstrated leadership and job performance.

The policies and procedures of the Advance Skills Education Program can be found in AR 621-5.

5. Functional Academic Skills Training (FAST)

FAST, which was formerly known as the Basic Skills Education Program (BSEP), is a standardized job-related curriculum providing instruction in the set of prerequisite academic competence necessary for job proficiency and preparation for advanced training. Command-selected service members who have a recognized educational deficiency, do not meet reenlistment requirements, or have a general technical (GT) score of less than 100 are referred by the commander to the Army Education Center. The service member is administered Adult Basic Education level D test. Service members who do not achieve the appropriate scores are scheduled for FAST program enrollment.

The FAST program is contracted out to education services providers in accordance with Federal and Army

acquisition regulations. The contract employee/instructor is usually employed intermittently and if employed full time is capable of teaching in more than one subject. The following Table displays the programs annual budget and annual overhead cost which is included in the annual budget, for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 13

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET	OVERHEAD COST
FY 1991	\$6,000,000	\$4,300,000
FY 1991	\$4,500,000	\$3,600,000
FY 1992	\$3,700,000	\$2,800,000
FY 1993	\$4,000,000	\$3,300,000

Increased GT scores, skills qualification and demonstrated job proficiency is how FAST measures its program success.

The policies and procedures of the Functional Academic Skills Training can be found in AR 621-5.

6. Academic Testing

Academic testing includes aptitude, achievement, and vocational interest testing supporting counseling and service member participation in secondary and post-secondary programs. Some examples include DANTES sponsored exams such as the College Level Exam Program (CLEP) and certification exams to assess functional academic skills deficiencies and determine reading ability. Counseling is required prior to service members participation in the Academic Testing program, as is

the case with other ACES programs and services. The appropriate test for the particular desired outcome is selected and, in the case of the credit-by-examination and certification testing, an assessment is made of service member preparedness for testing and likelihood of passing the particular test. Table 14 displays the program's annual budget which is broken down by materials and personnel cost for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 14

YEAR	MATERIALS \	PERSONNEL COST
FY 1990	\$131,890	\$2,840,738
FY 1991	\$184,737	\$2,575,721
FY 1992	\$370,630	\$3,128,270
FY 1993	NOT AVAILABLE	

Success of the Academic Testing program is measured by decreased numbers of courses that soldiers take to complete a Servicemember Opportunity College (SOCAD) degree. Successful testing of service members can stretch limited tuition assistance resources, allowing more service members to receive Tuition Assistance and have self-development opportunities. Success also is measured by assessing the time required for service member degree completion.

The policies and procedures of the Academic Testing can be found in AR 621-5.

7. College Programs

The College Program, which does not include Tuition Assistance, is a post-secondary program that provides service members with professional and personal self-development opportunities. Colleges and universities offering programs on Army installations must be members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC).

The following table shows the cost to Army for supporting operation of the SOC Army Degrees (SOCAD) program which is part of the DANTES contract with SOC.

TABLE 15

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1990	\$470,000
FY 1991	\$470,000
FY 1992	\$482,000
FY 1993	\$506,100

College Program success can be measured by positive customer feedback, increased SOCAD Student Agreements, increased program enrollments, accomplishment of client goals, attainment of career promotions, easy transitions to civilian jobs, and number of certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded.

The policies and procedures of the College Programs can be found in AR 621-5.

8. Tuition Assistance

Tuition Assistance is a form of financial assistance authorized by Congress (Title 10 USC 2007) for voluntary off-duty education programs that support the educational objectives of the Army and the service member's personal self-development goals. Service members are required to see a counselor prior to receiving TA approval to ensure the course relates to the service member's educational goal. Army policy requires the education service officer (ESO) to use the DA form 2171 Request For TA, as an obligation document when using TA. The ESO approval constitutes certification that funds are available and obligates the Army to the institution in the amount indicated on DA Form 2171. As a procurement document, this form must be issued before the course begins. Table 16 displays the programs annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 16

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1990	\$31,000,000
FY 1991	\$32,000,000
FY 1992	\$41,000,000
FY 1993	\$40,000,000

The program's success is determined by the number of completions for the number of enrollments.

The policies and procedures of the Tuition Assistance can be found in AR 621-5.

C. AIR FORCE

The Air Force actively supports education programs because education promotes professional and personal development, recruitment and retention. Service members obtain college educations and degrees of their choice.

The Air Force Education Services program provides educational opportunities and counseling services to eligible service members. Program counseling ranges from the basic skills levels through graduate university studies. Air Force Regulation (AFR) 213-1 describes the Education Services Program, its objectives, and its major components.

1. Community College of the Air Force (CCAF)

CCAF is dedicated to the purpose of providing enlisted service members the opportunity for professional development. CCAF is fully accredited by the Southern Association of College and Schools as a degree granting institution. Service members earn college credit for basic training, technical training, and professional military education which is applied to CCAF degree requirements. CCAF offers approximately 70 degree programs in 5 general career areas. Each program is designed to lead to an Associate in Applied Science degree upon completion of a minimum of 64 semester hours of Air Force and civilian course work. The program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993 was not provided.

The program's success is determined by the number of graduates per year.

Policies and procedures of CCAF can be found in, AFR 53-29 (Community College of the Air Force). This instruction covers CCAF's mission, goals, and a basic outline of responsibilities.

2. Missile Crew Member Education Program (MCMEP)

MCMEP provides Minuteman and Peacekeeper missile crew members the opportunity to earn a graduate degree without cost. The program is conducted at six missile bases (Malmstrom AFB MT, Whiteman AFB MO, Ellsworth AFB SD, F E Warren AFB WY, Minot AFB ND) through locally available educational institutions. MCMEP is designed and scheduled to facilitate participation of officers performing duty as missile crew members. Eligibility of a service member begins when a crew member is certified combat ready. Individuals who enroll in and receive a degree through the program incur a two-year active duty service commitment. The program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993 was not provided.

Policies and procedures for active duty service commitments can be found in AFR 36-51.

3. Professional Military Education (PME)

Officers and enlisted members may enroll in a variety of courses designed to help their professional and military development. These courses teach management principles,

techniques of effective communication, analysis of professional reading materials, problem-solving, international relations, national decision making, and defense management. The courses also cover the psychology of learning, individual differences, and the techniques of teaching. All of these courses give the service member broad skills and knowledge they will need at various stages in their career. The program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993 was not provided.

The program's success is determined by Air University. The Air Force follows recommendations from the University regarding the addition or deletion of courses.

Policies and procedures for PME can be found in AFRs 53-8; 50-39; 50-12; 50-5; ECI Catalog; Air University Catalog).

4. Extension Course Institute (ECI)

ECI is the Air Force's only extension education school. ECI supports the formal training and educational programs of the Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserves. It also provides courses for career enhancement to people throughout the Department of Defense and to U.S. Civil Service personnel. ECI plays a mandatory and essential part in the Air Force On-the-Job (OJT) program. ECI also provides study reference material for the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS). ECI offers nearly 400 courses to meet the

needs of its students. The program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993 was not provided.

The program's success is determined by Air University. The Air Force follows the recommendation of the University regarding addition, deletion and changes to courses.

Policies and procedures for ECI can be found in AFR 50-12.

5. Functional Skills Program

Service members who are identified as needing to improve reading, writing, or mathematics skills have a variety of services available through the Education Services Officers. The Air Force provides the following level and types of remedial opportunities:

- Group Study - Group study provides remedial programs in reading, writing, or mathematics. There were approximately 289 enrollments for FY1992. Courses are contracted with local institutions or individuals. Individualized instruction is the norm. The Air Force pays 100% of the service member's cost. The measurement the program success is the number of enrollments for group study.
- College/University/Adult Education Provider Courses
Individuals self - Service members refer themselves and attend on an off-duty basis. This includes non-credit 100 level courses in reading, writing and mathematics provided by institutions for the first time college students who do not possess skills sufficient to begin freshman level courses. It also includes remedial courses provided by adult education programs sponsored by high school or public institutions. Many of these programs are at no charge to the member. Measurement of the program is by the number of enrollments.
- High School Completion - This program is designed to assist members to compete or obtain skills necessary for a high school diploma or GED certificate. It is provided

by adult education public institutions at no charge. Tutoring is a source of assistance that is provided to members where numbers are too low to establish study groups or where group studies are not available with the Air Force paying 100% of the cost. The objective is for 100% of service members to have a minimum of a high school diploma or GED. Currently 99.9% have a high school degree.

- Diagnostic Placement - First time college students will be required to take an assessment test for placement in the appropriate college classes. Options would include remedial classes sponsored by colleges and universities and paid for by 75% Tuition Assistance. There is no current success measurement done for this program.

In FY1992, the Air Force enrollments were 754 at a cost of \$12,819.

AFR 213-1, 1-2(e)4 and 9-2 implement the functional skills programs for the Air Force.

6. Tuition Assistance (TA)

Tuition Assistance provides opportunities for personal development in meeting academic and technical occupational objectives. Service members are encouraged to pursue academic and/or technical studies during off-duty time. The Air Force pays 75% of tuition for all service members, both officers and enlisted. Table 17 displays the program's annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 17

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1990	\$37,900,000
FY 1991	\$34,000,000
FY 1992	\$46,000,000
FY 1993	\$46,000,000

The program's success is determined by the number of degrees completed per thousand of population, cost per individual, and by a number of quality education system visits, IG inspections, and audits.

AFR 213-1, Chapter 3 defines the tuition assistance program and prescribes procedures, eligibilities, and limitations.

D. MARINE CORPS

Mr. Gregory Shields is the Marine Corps director for VOLED programs. The Marine Corps total funding level allocated for all VOLED programs are displayed in Table 18.

TABLE 18

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1990	N/A
FY 1991	\$8,827,000
FY 1992	\$9,717,000
FY 1993	\$9,879,000

1. Tuition Assistance Program (TA)

The Marines Corps TA program provides active duty service members with financial assistance for the pursuit of approved educational programs at civilian secondary or post-secondary institutions during their off-duty time. This program may be used at the secondary level for the completion of courses leading to high school diploma where tuition cost

is fully funded. Tuition Assistance may be used for undergraduate, graduate, or vocational/technical study. Table 19 displays the program annual budget for FY1990 through FY1993.

TABLE 19

YEAR	ANNUAL BUDGET
FY 1990	\$8,162,000
FY 1991	\$8,827,000
FY 1992	\$9,717,000
FY 1993	\$9,879,000

The program's success is determined by the amount of course completions, graduation rates, command support, and enrollment figures.

Policies and procedures for the Tuition Assistance Program can be found in ALMAR 046/93.

2. Basic Skills Education Program

The BSEP provides on-duty, fully funded instruction in English, English as a Secondary Language, reading, and mathematics to service members identified as deficient in one or more of these skills. Participation in the BSEP may be voluntary or mandatory. While no funds are actually budgeted for this program, each base/station commander has the responsibility to provide this program.

Measurement for the BSEP is by Pre and Post testing utilizing the Test for Adult Basic Education. If the service

member improves from the Pre test to the Post test, then the program is measured as successful.

Policies and procedures for the Basic Skills Education Program can be found in Marine Corps Order 550.23.

E. SUMMARY

Chapter IV summarizes the information about the military services' VOLED programs obtained from the questionnaires and personal interviews. Chapter V will present a comparative analysis to determine which programs are most suitable for consolidation, as well as a cost/benefit analysis of consolidation versus continued decentralization.

V. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED

This chapter analyzes the data contained in the questionnaires and personal interviews to determine if it is beneficial and cost effective for DOD to consolidate individual service Voluntary Education (VOLED) Programs. The chapter opens with a comparative analysis of current voluntary education programs followed by a cost/benefit analysis of consolidation versus continued decentralization. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings of the data analysis which forms the basis for the conclusions and recommendations developed in Chapter VI.

A. GENERAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CONSOLIDATION

Each military service was asked to give some possible advantages and disadvantages of consolidation. The majority of the pros and cons stated were the same from one service to another. The following list is a consolidated version of the projected advantages and disadvantages:

1. Advantages of Consolidation

- Standardization of policies for all services
- More economical to administer through one education center where there are several services represented
- Consolidation would ensure that every person entering the military would have the same opportunity to utilize tuition assistance
- Tuition assistance would be the same for all services

- Education opportunities would be equalized, possibly raising the quality of some services' programs
- Reduce manpower needed for management

2. Disadvantages of Consolidation

- Could reduce focus of a particular service's program when there is disagreement about the value of that program
- It could be difficult to satisfy the unique needs of each service
- Difficult to have one education office serving all services because the services themselves are so different

B. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

As described in earlier chapters, there is a perceived need for some type of consolidation of the military services' VOLED programs. At the time of the personal interviews, each service's representative expressed a need and willingness to consolidate selected VOLED programs. However, each representative also expressed some reservations about consolidation. In this section, the purpose of each military services' VOLED program is compared to the other services' VOLED programs to find similarities. Based on these findings, selected VOLED programs will become prime candidates for consolidation, and only those programs will be discussed through the rest of the thesis.

1. Scope

Table 20 shows available VOLED programs and which military service uses them. These programs were discussed in

Chapter IV and will now be analyzed as to suitability for consolidation.

TABLE 20

MILITARY SERVICES VOLED PROGRAMS				
PROGRAMS	NAVY	ARMY	AIR FORCE	MARINE CORPS
Tuition Assistance	X	X	X	X
Functional Skills	X	X		X
Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOCNAV) - Navy College Program - Army	X	X		
Apprenticeship	X	X		
Program for Afloat College Education (PACE)	X			
Concurrent Admission (CONAP)		X		
Advance Skills Education (ASEP)		X		
Academic Testing		X		
Community College of the Air Force			X	
Missile Crew Member Education (MCMEP)			X	
Professional Military Education (PME)			X	
Extension Course Institution (ECI)			X	

**** ALL THE SERVICES USE DANTES FOR TESTING**

2. Criteria

After review of the questionnaires and the personal interviews, similarities and redundancies among the various programs became clear. These similarities become the major

criteria on which the author will base recommendations for consolidation. The three major criteria by which prime candidates for consolidation were selected are common purpose, shared goals, and same target audience.

3. Analysis

Based on the above criteria, all VOLED programs were categorized based on suitability for consolidation. As stated in Chapter II, each service has a different military mission; consequently, certain VOLED programs are designed to meet that particular service's mission. It was not feasible to combine those programs. On the other hand, many programs were ideally suited for consolidation and thus have been listed as prime candidates.

a. Programs Not Suitable For Consolidation

The Navy's Program for Afloat College Education is a program specifically unique to the Navy and not unsuited for consolidation. The courses are taught aboard ship during extended deployments. It enables sailors to continue their college education aboard the ship without interruption caused by absence from the traditional classroom.

The Army's programs, Concurrent Admission Program (CONAP), Academic Testing Program, and Advance Skills Education Program (ASEP) are unsuitable because they are unique to the Army. Both CONAP and the Academic Testing Program are aimed at young recruits. CONAP is simply a

recruiting technique used by the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. The Academic Testing Program is a step added by the Army to help service members identify their educational goals and select the most beneficial VOLED program. ASEP is targeted at non-commissioned officers who have demonstrated high leadership potential but require greater management skills to assist their career development.

The Air Force sponsors such programs as the Missile Cruise Member Education Program, Professional Military Education, and the Extension Course Institution, for which there are no corresponding programs in the other services. Because these programs are not duplicated, it would not be possible to consolidate them with any other programs.

b. Prime Candidates For Consolidation

Out of the 13 VOLED programs displayed in Table 20, the following five VOLED programs are the most feasible candidates for consolidation, based on their descriptions in Chapter IV and the criteria noted in section B.2. of this chapter.

- Tuition Assistance
- Functional Skills
- Servicemembers Opportunity College (Army and Navy)
- Apprenticeship (Army and Navy)
- Community College of the Air Force

The conclusions and recommendations developed in Chapter VI will pertain to these VOLED programs.

The program entitled Tuition Assistance (TA) is standard among the military services. The goal of TA is the same for each service: to give each service member an opportunity to further his educational goals. Each military service has different budgets and caps associated with their own administration of TA within their branch of service. These differences will be further discussed in the cost/benefit section of this thesis. Despite these differences, TA would be improved by consolidation in that each service member, regardless of branch of service, would have an equal opportunity to participate under the exactly same criteria.

Functional Skills VOLED is another prime candidate for consolidation. This program exists in each service, with only minor differences. The Marine Corps VOLED goes by the name Basic Skills Education Program, the Navy has the Basic Skills Program, the Army's program is entitled Functional Academic Skills Training, and the Air Force's program is entitled the Functional Skills Program. Despite the difference in names, however, the goals are the same: to improve the competence of service members in such basic areas as reading, writing, and mathematics. Upgraded skills in these areas enable the service member to improve their promotion potential and to better serve their branch of the service.

The Apprenticeship Programs of the Navy and Army are also good candidates for consolidation. These programs share the goal of enabling participants to obtain certification from the Department of Labor for their work experience. Any differences exist in the area of administration.

The Navy and Army both participate in the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges program, while the Air Force sponsors the Community College of the Air Force. The Navy's version is called SOCNAV, while the Army refers to its program as the College Programs (SOCAD). SOCNAV and SOCAD offer help in obtaining college credit for experience, and are designed to enable service members to transfer credits from one institution to the next when duty stations change. The Community College of the Air Force offers college credit for work experience, accepts the transfer of credits, and awards Associate Degrees. In summary, all three are designed to assist service members in obtaining an Associate's Degree.

C. COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS: CONSOLIDATION VERSUS CONTINUED DECENTRALIZATION

1. Tuition Assistance

Appendix B shows tuition assistance by military service from FY1990 through FY1993. It displays the cost of each service's program, their respective monetary caps, and the associated limits each service imposes. The actual amount

spent varies from year to year. The following cost analysis is based on the FY1990 through FY1992 cost data obtained from DANTES and the military services.

Over the past three years (FY1990 - FY1992), the tuition assistance cost per ungraduate course ranged from \$94.26 dollars to \$186.56 dollars. (DANTES, FY1992) Military services' monetary allocations for the undergraduate level are:

Army.....	\$255.00 per course
Navy	\$285.00 per course
Air Force	\$562.50 per course
Marine Corps	\$2,150.00 per year

The Army and Navy allocate a very similar amount per course. The Air Force allocates almost double what the Army and Navy allow. The Marine Corps' figure is based on a yearly allocation, so the cost per course may vary depending on number of courses taken.

For FY1990 through FY1992, the tuition assistance cost per graduate course ranged from \$240.46 dollars to \$480.94 dollars. (DANTES FY92) Military services' monetary allocations for the graduate level are:

Army.....	\$510.00 per course
Navy	\$395.00 per course
Air Force	\$562.50 per course
Marine Corps	\$3500.00 per year

The Army and Air Force graduate level allocation caps are close for graduate level courses, whereas the Navy's is significantly lower. Again, the Marine Corps has a yearly cap instead of a per course cap.

a. Suggested Changes in Policy

There are many changes which should be made to unify policy regarding both graduate and undergraduate TA. For instance, it is advisable that one monetary cap be established for all service members. Further, the number of courses permitted per year per student should be standardized. Finally, because of funding limitations, participants in the TA program should be prohibited for the purpose of obtaining duplicate degrees (i.e., a second Bachelor Degree). These standardized policies would equalize opportunities for service members who wish to attend classes.

b. Suggested Changes in Administration

Major cost savings in the Tuition Assistance program could be realized in the area of administration if management of the program were put under OSD or an executive organization. Additional administrative savings are possible through the consolidation of administering offices in areas where multiple service populations exist. Both the proposed centralization and consolidation would make the program more efficient, while at the same time, improving both the quality and equality of service to the service member.

In support of consolidation, interviewers estimate that personnel at voluntary education offices spend about 40% of their time processing TA. While consolidation would likely cause an initial one-time increase in costs; for example,

example, changes would need to be made in the computer system (ADP) to accommodate all Military Services, in the long run the reduction in the number of personnel required to post grades, bill, invoice, and initiate collection actions would cause a considerable reduction in the overhead expense of TA.

Where there is more than one service in a single location, a centralized TA office should be established to service all branches. For example, each of the services currently has a voluntary education office in the Pentagon where TA paperwork is processed. The establishment of a single VOLED location with a consolidated TA section would eliminate the need to staff separate offices. If a similar consolidation were instituted at each appropriate location, the cost savings would be significant.

2. Functional Skills

The following Table displays FY1992 data for functional skills.

Table 21

	Troop strength	Enroll-ments	TA Cost	Cost / enrmt	Contract Cost
Army	606,124	79,231	\$0.0	\$61.16	\$4,846,122
Navy	546,739	15,818	\$0.0	\$117.10	\$1,852,221
Marine Corps	184,574	7,174	\$460,669	\$67.19	\$ 21,353
Air Force	450,352	754	\$ 12,819	\$17.00	\$ 0.0
Total	1,787,789	102,977	\$473,488	\$69.85	\$6,719,696

Currently, each service has its own individual functional skills program. Each service uses various states' organizations, community colleges or high schools, which offer these programs free of charge, where available. Alternatively, each service independently contracts for instructors to provide these services. In some instances, TA is utilized to cover expenses. In other cases, computer software is purchased for use as instructional tools.

One possible way to reduce overhead would be the utilization of one contractor for all the services. Using the Army contractor as a unit cost, \$61.16 per enrollment multiplied by the total number of enrollments for all the services is \$6,298,073.00, for a savings of \$421,623.00.

Another cost saving would be realized if the military services would use the same software packages for computers. The current practice of individual and varied purchases of software packages is expensive. The time-honored practice of bulk purchasing could be applied to the purchase of software packages, resulting in savings for the Functional Skills Program.

3. Apprenticeship Program

The Navy and the Army are the only two services which offer an Apprenticeship Program. The Navy program is run from a centralized office in Pensacola, Florida, and employs two government workers who administer all necessary paperwork.

The Army program, by contrast, is a decentralized program. This type of decentralization calls for the part-time efforts of approximately 200 personnel over the various Army bases to administer their paperwork.

There would be great cost savings if the two programs were combined, and the Navy's centralized system of administration were adopted. One estimate was that the Army saving in expense for manpower alone would be more than half.

4. SOC and CCAF

Both the Navy and the Army encourage college attendance under the Servicemembers Opportunity College programs. The Community College of the Air Force encourages attendance also, but through a program of their own design.

a. SOCAD2 / SOCNAV2 / CCAF

The following table displays data regarding the SOCAD2, SOCNAV2, and CCAF programs for FY1992.

Table 22

	SOCAD2	SOCNAV2	CCAF
New Student Agreements	23,849	3,664	*
Degrees Completed	4,086	1,404	13,343
Budget for FY1992	\$482,000 #	\$146,955 #	\$4,529,073

* Since FY1991, all Air Force enlisted personnel are automatically enrolled in CCAF.

Cost includes SOCAD2/SOCAD4 and SOCNAV2/SOCNAV4

In FY1992, the SOCAD2 and SOCNAV2 programs assisted service members in earning a total of 5,490 Associate Degrees from participating colleges.

Since its inception in 1972 the SOC program has been one of the Army's and Navy's most successful educational programs. This program has always been consolidated. The program's greatest asset has been its ability to provide a standardized Associate Degree and Baccalaureate degree program for each service's all volunteer force, while still maintaining enough flexibility to cater to the specialized needs of each individual service. This is proven by the individual manuals that SOC produces for SOCAD2 and SOCNAV2.

While the SOC program was designed for the needs of the Army and Navy, it serves several other programs. The National Guard Outreach program encourages service members to earn college credentials and helps them to obtain credit for the military and other educational experience. SOC has also joined with the Army Recruiting Command to develop a Concurrent Admissions Program (CONAP) to increase college enrollment of Army Veterans.

Currently SOC's national office is located in Washington D.C., where it administers its various services. The SOC program serves as an excellent model because it consolidates policies and procedures while still tailoring to each individual services need.

In FY1992 CCAF awarded 13,343 two-year degrees, more than twice the number of degrees awarded through the SOC programs. However, the degree is only obtainable in the participant's rating, there is very little flexibility for

consolidation with the SOC programs. Further, the CCAF degree is terminal; that is, it leads to an Associate in Applied Science Degree, which would require further course work to transfer to any four year institution. The primary value of the CCAF is that it encourages people to continue their education. This program would not be easily combined with the SOC programs because it has a different focus. Therefore, it should continue as an independent program.

b. SOCAD4 / SOCNAV4

The goal of these SOC programs is the same, to earn a Bachelor's Degree in the field of the participant's choice. These two programs are administered in the same manner as SOCAD2 and SOCNAV2.

D. SUMMARY

Chapter V analyzed the data contained in the questionnaires and personal interviews. It presented a comparative analysis to determine which programs are most suitable for consolidation, as well as a cost/benefit analysis of consolidation versus continued decentralization. Chapter VI will present conclusions and recommendations.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the military force drawdown and shrinking DOD budget, it is imperative that DOD eliminate program duplication among the services. Consequently, service members are reevaluating their educational needs in an effort to become more promotable, or to prepare for possible transition to the civilian sector. New recruit candidates are looking more closely at educational opportunities offered by the military services; the desire to obtain an education has displaced the desire for job security as the number one reason people join the service.

A. CONCLUSIONS

The findings in this thesis are based on the results of a questionnaire administered to the VOLED representatives for all four military services, personal interviews with each representative, and information from DANTES.

Of all the military VOLED programs that were examined, Tuition Assistance, SOCNAV/SOCAD/CCAF, Function Skills and the Apprenticeship programs were deemed suitable candidates to be analyzed for consolidation or centralization. A preliminary cost/benefit analysis of these selected VOLED programs indicates that three programs Tuition Assistance, Function

Skills and Apprenticeship would be cost-effective after consolidation or centralization.

This thesis has shown that the major cost saving in all the selected programs will be the reduction in overhead cost and personnel staffing. However, each military VOLED base office should continue to provide all necessary assistance to service members. The consolidation will eliminate the need for the services to scramble for funds and at the same time make the selected VOLED programs equitable.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Tuition Assistance

It is recommended that the administration process for the tuition assistance programs be consolidated at the DOD level with one policy for all services. It is further recommended that the programs currently available be centralized in areas where multiple services are located. Consolidation will cause an increase in some costs, while the proposed centralization would result in an initial decrease in expenditures for overhead. In the long run, however, the increase and decrease should balance each other out.

2. Functional Skills

It is recommended that consolidation be implemented; however, centralization is not feasible due to the hands-on nature of the courses. Consolidation will cause a decrease in overhead costs, thereby freeing up more funds for course

expenses. This will allow more service members to utilize the program.

3. Apprenticeship Program

It is recommended that these programs be consolidated and centralized. Consolidation would save overhead costs, particularly for the Army. Centralization will reduce complications in administration, therefore making the process smoother for service members to obtain their journeyman certification.

4. SOC and CCAF

It is recommended that the SOC programs of the Army and Navy remain as they are. It is recommended that CCAF remain as is, because its goal is to award rating-related degrees, whereas the SOC programs allow the service member more flexibility in choice of degree. Keeping the SOC program separate from the CCAF provides the service member with a choice in types of degrees.

5. SOC as a Model

The SOC program is an excellent model that should be used when consolidating or centralizing Tuition Assistance, Functional Skills and Apprenticeship programs. It has shown that military service VOLED programs can be consolidated and yet still cater to each service's individual needs.

C. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While this thesis has shown that there are benefits in the consolidation/centralization of selected VOLED programs, there are areas in which further research should be conducted. Even though the thesis examined the benefits of consolidation verses cost effectiveness, it did not explore the impact of consolidation on individual service members. As consolidation takes place, will the service members continue to receive the same support as they did with on base VOLED support?

Some of the consolidations proposed in this thesis (Apprenticeship, SOC, and CCAF) involve only two services. It is recommended that these programs, as well as the Academic Testing program, be examined for possible expansion to other services. Should these programs be open to all military service members to further establish equity among the military services? If feasible for expansion, should consolidation be examined as an option? Any further review, however, should not be limited to the programs mentioned above, but should include all programs currently available in all services.

APPENDIX A

23 July 1993

From: LT Marie E. Oliver, USNR, 454-35-2625/1105,
SMC Box 2026, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA
93943

To:

Subj: Thesis Assistance; Request for

Encl: (1) Questionnaire

1. Enclosure (1) is the primary means of data collection for a thesis in the Financial Management curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. The thesis consists of a comparative analysis of the armed forces (Navy, Marine Corps, Army and Air Force) voluntary education programs and a cost benefit analysis on consolidation of these programs into one Department of Defense (DOD) voluntary education program. The results of the study may be useful to DOD in further examining if these programs should or can be consolidated into one DOD program.

2. As the education coordinator for your branch of the service, you are in a good position to provide a sound assessment of your voluntary education programs. This questionnaire attempts to catalog each aspect of all the armed forces voluntary education programs which are programs that military personnel elect to participate in. Participation is normally limited to off-duty time, unless otherwise directed by legislation or by military service policy. I appreciate your best effort to present an accurate picture of each program. Please be more descriptive than what is stated in the "Education Programs in the Department of Defense 1991-92" catalog. Be as specific as possible with each question, for this questionnaire is a very important source of information for the thesis. If further contact is necessary, I will appreciate it if I can contact you or your representative.

3. Due to the time constraints and importance of the thesis, a relatively quick response is necessary. Therefore, please complete and return the questionnaire by 27 August 1993. Questionnaires may be mailed to the above address or fax (408) 656-2138 or AVN 878-2138 (Please do not fax your questionnaire if it exceeds five pages).

4. As a courtesy to you, and with appreciation for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire, a copy of my thesis will be mailed to you when it is completed. I have already put your command (with your office as the destination) on my thesis mailing list. Hopefully, it will be a good tool in mapping out if it is feasible to combine the services voluntary education programs.

Very Respectfully,

Marie E. Oliver

LT USNR

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. This questionnaire examines the different types of voluntary education programs your service operates.

"Voluntary Education Programs" refers to programs in which military personnel elect to participate. Participation is normally limited to off-duty time, unless otherwise directed by legislation or by military service policy.

2. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part one consists of general questions about your service voluntary education programs, part two consists of specific questions about each voluntary education program. Please make as many copies of part two as needed. Use the space to answer the question that precede it. Feel free to comment on any question: how the question may not apply to your service, how you may have made certain assumptions in answering the question, how the question may only touch on a more important, but unexamined issue. In short, use extra paper to "flush out" the questionnaire. The personal touch that you provide will certainly help me determine the validity and applicability of the research results, and it may uncover other areas that the questionnaire may have failed to account for.

3. Please answer all the questions. They will be heavily used in the analysis section in the thesis.

4. Once you have completed the questionnaire, please mail it to: LT Marie E. Oliver, USNR, SMC Box 2026, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA 93943 or fax (408) 656-2138 or AVN 878-2138 (please do not fax questionnaire if they exceeds five pages).

5. If further assistance is needed on the questionnaire, feel free to contact me at (408) 373-6410.

PART ONE

DEMOGRAPHIC

(1) Service _____

(2) Name and title of person in charge of the branch of
service voluntary education programs.

PROGRAM FUNDING

(3) At what level are your voluntary education funds
administered

(4) What was the total funding level allocated for all
voluntary education programs for your service for the
following fiscal years?

FY 1990 _____ FY 1991 _____
FY 1992 _____ FY 1993 _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

(5) Does your service have a separate voluntary education school (ie. the Air Force has the Community College (CCAF))? If so, submit how much is spent annually and how it is funded. Also please forward an instruction or catalog for the school.

Yes _____

No _____

FY 1990 _____ FY 1991 _____
FY 1992 _____ FY 1993 _____

(6) Please provide your perspective on the history/background of how the issue of consolidation of the

armed forces voluntary education programs came about. Also, include any other information you feel is important for me to know in writing this thesis.

(7) List what you see as pro's and con's of consolidating voluntary education programs under DOD. Be as specific as possible, for this is the major question of the thesis.

| Service:

| Program:

| Program instruction title:

|

| Description of program:

|

|

|

|

|

| Who is the program manager?

| Name/Title:

| Address:

| Phone:

| Who distributes the funds for this program? (lowest level distributed)

| Name:

| Address:

| Phone:

| How do you measure this programs success?

|

|

|

What has been the program's annual budget for the following FYs?

FY 1990 _____ FY 1991 _____

FY 1992 _____ FY 1993 _____

Give a brief description of how a service member enrolls in the program.

PART TWO
(continued)

|Service:

|Program:

|What is the annual overhead cost (including man-years) of running the
|program?

|FY 1990 _____ FY 1991 _____

|FY 1992 _____ FY 1993 _____

|Does this voluntary education program require civilian instructors? If
|so, are they contracted employees or government employees and are they
|full time?

Extra space for answers

TUITION ASSISTANCE BY MILITARY SERVICE (August 1993)

* For comparison, the 3 semester hour course is used.
 Possible policy change: Army may remove course caps in FY94
 Source: Chart was obtained from Bureau of Naval Personnel

SERVICE	NAVY	ARMY	Air Force	Marine Corps
FY90 Execution	\$18.3M	\$31.0M	\$37.0M	\$7.3M
FY91 Execution	\$19.6M	\$32.0M	\$34.0M	\$9.4M
FY92 Execution	\$24.5M	\$41.0M	\$46.0M	\$10.0M
FY93 Budget	\$23.4M	\$40.0M	\$46.0M	\$9.9M
MAXIMUM TA authorized.*	High School: Fully funded. Undergraduate:75%, not to exceed \$285 per course Graduate:75%, not to exceed \$395 per course Six courses or 18 credit hours per individual per fiscal year, whichever is greater. Will not support second (duplicate) degree. VOTECH capped at \$1000 per year.	High School: Fully funded. Undergraduate:75%, not to exceed \$255 per course Graduate:75%, not to exceed \$510 per course COURSE and \$675 OCONUS No limit.	High School: Fully funded. Undergraduate:75%, not to exceed \$562.50 per course. Graduate:75%, not to exceed \$562.50 per course.	High School: Fully funded. Undergraduate:75%, not to exceed \$2,150 per year. Graduate:75%, not to exceed \$3500 per year.
Limits			Cannot exceed full time status as determined by the college. No TA for degrees at or below level already held.	24 semester hours or equivalent per year.

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